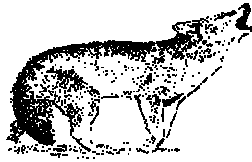


The North Alabama Wildlife Rehabilitators



256-883-0667

The North Alabama Wildlife Rehabilitators, formed in 1987, is an all volunteer non-profit organization of trained rehabilitators, educators, hotline workers, rescue workers, and veterinarians formed to provide care and treatment of native wildlife with the purpose of returning them to the wild. Our major goal is to educate the public about the value of wildlife and the many dangers these animals face. Our hope is to promote understanding, preservation of, and appreciation for our rich wildlife population.

The NAWR is dedicated to providing the highest quality of care to our native wild animals. We also strive to solve "nuisance" animal problems humanely and without lethal consequences. We must learn to live in peace with our native wild animals, to respect them, and not to take them for granted. Please contact the NAWR with questions, concerns, or "nuisance" animal tips.

CO-EXISTING WITH WILDLIFE

There are two common factors that are true for all wildlife: The need for food and shelter. Remove these necessities and the animal should move on in search of a new area. Several problem areas are listed below as well as several suggestions for getting a wild animal to move on.

1. The first step is to determine whether there is an actual problem & many times that answer is no. If a wild animal runs through your yard or makes its home in your backyard tree, a problem most likely does not exist.
2. Be sure to eliminate all outside food sources, such as pet food, birdseed, etc. in the evening. A free meal will draw many types of animals including stray dogs and cats.
3. Use metal or heavy plastic trash containers. Secure lids with bungee cords, ropes, etc.
4. Block openings, which lead under structures such as houses, decks, and porches to prevent animals from making homes there. You can use sturdy wire mesh (1/4-inch hardware cloth or similar material) to screen such openings. Bury the covering a foot below the ground to prevent animals, such as skunks, from digging underneath. Remember anything that you can pull off, wild animals can also pull off.
5. Cap off fireplaces. NEVER create a fire to try and evict an animal! This is cruel and very dangerous.
6. Use floodlights to keep your yard well lit.
7. If you have fruit trees, pick the fallen food daily to keep rodents, insects, and wild animals away. Wild animals are also attracted to the rodents and insects that eat the fruit.
8. Remove brush piles, stacked lumber, wood piles, and similar sources of shelter which can be inviting.
9. Compost heaps also lure all these critters. Keep your compost area as far away from your home as possible.
10. Keep your pet doors, sliding doors, and garage doors closed from dusk to dawn to prevent animals from coming into the house. If the animal is already inside slowly and quietly close off the doors to the rest of the house, lock up your domestic animals if you have any, shut off the light in the room that contains the animal (it will probably be hiding), and turn on the light outside the door where a little bit of food awaits. Be sure to smooth a layer of flour at the doorway so you can see the footprints going out.

11. Pepper spray can be used to deter animals from gnawing on structures or entering openings. (See recipe below for complete instructions)
12. Spotlights, strobe lights, sprinklers, radios, and other loud noises may be a quick fix to evict wild animals from attics, under houses, and gardens.

SUGGESTIONS FOR EVICTING WILDLIFE

Animals under a building

This is one of the most common problems. If under a building, it is best to wait until after dark and let the animal leave by itself to seek food. Place a layer of flour at the entrance. Tracks will indicate footprints leading in or out. (Be certain not to seal in babies)

If you are not sure how many animals are present, you can keep each out as it leaves by making a one-way door. Such a door can be made by attaching a section of ½ inch hardware cloth (or similar material) to the opening, which is hinged at the top and left loose on the other three sides. It should be larger than the opening so it cannot swing inward. This will let them leave and not re-enter.

Setting up a bright light near the entrance may discourage them from returning to a den. Some have also recommended noise such as a radio (talk shows or loud music with plenty of bass). Skunks ears are sensitive and they do not like loud noises.

When you are sure that the animal is gone, seal up the entrance securely as described above. You can seal up a dug hole with dirt or concrete but you should also include the wire mesh near the area anyway.

Animals in a window well, a dumpster, cellar or a hole in the ground

Carefully lower a cleated board or a board with a nailed-on towel into the hole to allow the animal to climb out and escape. When you are sure that the animal is gone, seal the entrance.

Animals in a pond or a swimming pool

Secure a towel at the edge of the pool so the animal can climb out or use a pool net to scoop the animal out and set it on the ground.

Animals in a garden

The best remedy for animals digging up your garden is a sprinkler. Water is a great deterrent. There are even sensor-controlled sprinklers that only spray when an intruder enters the area.

DON'T'S

1. Do not use moth balls or moth flakes (which contain ammonia) or pans of ammonia. They have been recommended in the past to drive away animals but it rarely works. This method is not only toxic to the animals, but the environment and to yourself.
2. Be careful not to lock out any animal during breeding seasons without first making absolutely sure that there have not been any babies left behind.
3. There are not any oral toxicants that are registered to control wild animals. Anything capable of poisoning an animal would most certainly be capable of poisoning pets, wildlife, you AND your children, so it should NEVER be used.

TRAPPING

This should not be done and rarely solves the problem. Remember trapping and removing an animal from an area only leaves a free spot open for another animal to move into. This should only be done after all other efforts have been exhausted. If you call any removal agency, first ask if they euthanise the trapped animal. If the answer is yes, keep trying to find another agency. Humane agencies and organizations exist in almost every city. Trapping and euthanising an animal should be done only as the LAST RESORT!

RELOCATING

Relocating is usually a bad idea as most appropriate habitat areas are already full, and dropping in one more animal merely sets the stage for territorial fights. There may also be problems finding food and water sources as well as separating a mother from her babies, which will die without her. Moving an animal because they are a bother is not the way to handle a problem and would not be any different from someone moving your home and dumping you elsewhere because they did not like you being there.

It is important to remember whether removing an animal from an unwanted structure or relocating them entirely, that you must be very careful not to do this during baby season. You might not only be separating a mother from her young, which would be every bit as upsetting to her as it would with your own children, but you may also create other problems for yourself when you have to deal with the scared, hungry, and possibly sickly babies. Because of the world's disappearing wildlife habitats, when you move an animal away from its home another animal is right behind it to fill that space.

Some various species have been listed below along with the times that they are most likely to have young with them and when it is most important to be careful of disrupting a nest.

PEPPER SPRAY RECIPE

- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1-2 fresh jalapeno peppers, chopped (or if canned, use 3-4 peppers)
- 3 heaping Tbsp. crushed cayenne pepper
- 2 quarts water

Boil all ingredients for 20 minutes. While boiling, keep face and eyes out of steam. As steam dissipates, it becomes completely safe. Allow mixture to cool, then strain. Use the liquid full strength in a sprayer (Don't forget to wear gloves, goggles, and a mask, and do not get on skin. Remember this is powerful stuff!). Store the remaining liquid in the refrigerator for up to 5 days (before it loses its strength).

PLEASE READ BEFORE YOU USE!

This recipe has worked on all wildlife intruders, except for birds and snakes. This spray is hotter than any commercial pepper spray or mace, so use with caution. This spray not only works on wild animals, it also works on domestic pets and humans, so be careful. If you get it on your hands, wash them under cold running water, and do not rub your eyes. If the solution does get into your eyes it will burn for 30-40 minutes.

To evict animals from attics, spray the edges of eaves on the inside. This will be enough to repel them. There is no need to cover the entire attic. Pack entrance holes with the dried vegetable matter strained from the solution. Avoid spraying attics during baby season. If babies are sprayed directly, they will die miserably. So DO NOT spray nests. Spraying all but that area will limit the mother to such a small space that she will move her young to an outside nest.

For beavers, also use the vegetable matter strained from the mixture, and spread it around the base of trees. Then spray the tree trunk from the ground up to three feet. Spray every night for

5-7 days, and the animal will leave. If the animal gets the spray on their face, eyes, and nose they will rub it in the dirt until the burning stops.

The solution can be sprayed on grass and will last all night. Caution: Do not spray in the wind. For foxes, coyotes, and other animals that use a trail, spray the solution on their trail. It will burn their feet and cause them to leave the area.

For an even stronger mixture, use less water, just enough to float the vegetables, and boil. Pour this into a blender or food processor to make a paste. This stronger paste can be used along the edges of decks. This paste will dry and crust and stick to the wood. It should not discolor the wood, although it is always a good idea to test a small area first. If you use the paste on your deck, be sure to keep children and pets off!

Pepper spray may sound cruel, but it is much more humane than trapping and killing the intruders.

Raccoons

Most breed around February with a usual litter of 2-5 babies around April or May. Young are weaned around 12 weeks and stay with the mother until the following spring.

Skunks

Skunks usually mate in January through March with babies being born around late April and early May, but sometimes are early as February. Skunks are weaned in about 7-8 weeks and may remain in the nest until around early August.

Squirrels

Squirrels give birth twice a year, in the spring (January-April) and in the fall (August-September). There are usually 2-4 babies to a litter. The babies are self-sustaining at about 12-14 weeks of age and will leave the nest in search of their own territory.

If you really need them out immediately, then you will want to get the mother to move the babies on her own. Very gently tamper with the nest. Such as: pull the top of the nest off, if possible, slide the nest over a foot or so. Carefully rub your hand over all the babies so they will pick up your scent. Remember to be very gentle, babies are quite fragile. Check the nest periodically to see if the mother moved her babies. When moved, begin blocking holes. If the mother has or knows of an alternate nest site, she will usually move her young within an hour or so. If she has to find or build a new nest, it may take 5 or 6 hours.

Birds

Baby bird season extends through spring and summer. In most situations, the best thing to do is put the baby back in the nest or tree that it fell out of and as the babies become fledglings (feathered & learning how to fly), the best thing to do is to leave them alone. Fledgling birds spend quite a bit of time on the ground learning how to find food and stretching their wings, so NO KIDNAPPING ALLOWED!

Comments

Many people have irrational fears when it comes to wild animals. An animal does not automatically have rabies or another illness if it is seen in the daytime. Breeding seasons, climate changes, and habitat destruction are some other reasons you might see an animal in the daytime. Actual aggressive physical contact with wild animals is extremely rare. They are, in fact, as scared of you as you are of them.

Recommended reading material- Wild Neighbors: The Humane Approach to Living with Wildlife, written by the Humane Society of the United States. This book has detailed solutions for dealing with all types of "nuisance" wild animals. You may also call the NAWR, and we can give you advice regarding most "nuisance" animal questions.

Remember every animal has its place and this is just as much their land as it is ours. These animals play a vital role in our ecosystem. Most of these animals eat a variety of destructive and disease causing insects and rodents and some help clean up carrion on our streets. No matter what methods of removal we try, some animals will simply stay put. This is mostly true when development has invaded their habitat. As our land disappears, we should be thankful that we are still surrounded by these amazing creatures, because generations from now people may not be so lucky. We must learn how to live in peace with wildlife, to enjoy wildlife, and not to take our wildlife for granted.

The North Alabama Wildlife Rehabilitators does not have a relocation service, but in extreme circumstances we will gladly come out and assess the situation and in some cases we will remove the animal. If the animal is already trapped, the NAWR will come out to relocate it. Instead of euthanising any animal, we would rather give the animal another chance at life. Please do not attempt to physically contact any wild animal, leave that up to professionals. Please call us with any questions, concerns, or comments. Our hotline number is 256-883-0667.